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Party competition in the Middle East: spatial competition in the post-Arab Spring era

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ABSTRACT

This paper charts the nature of political cleavage between major parties in post-Arab Spring elections in five Mediterranean region countries, with data from online opt-in surveys. We compare the Moroccan elections, held under a consolidated authoritarian regime, with the transitional cases of Tunisia and Egypt as well as the more mature democracies of Turkey and Israel. Voter opinions are obtained on 30 salient issues, and parties and voters are aligned along two dimensions. We trace country-specific cleavage patterns and reflections of party system maturity in these five countries. The cases of Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco reveal that in less settled cleavage structures there is little congruence between vote propensities for parties and agreement levels with policy positions compared to the more institutionalized democracies of Israel and Turkey where voters exhibit a higher likelihood to vote for a party as the distance between the voter and the party in the policy space gets smaller.

Introduction

A series of uprisings that became known as the Arab Spring resulted in the toppling of autocratic regimes in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011, which set into motion a series of—at least partly—free and open elections in long-established dictatorships. However, in Egypt, the democratically elected president, Mohammed Morsi, was toppled by a military intervention. In Tunisia, unrest and political crisis continued with the assassination of two high-profile politicians from the leftist secular opposition. While at the end of 2014 a democratic election brought a new president to power in Tunisia, elections in Egypt were prepared for November 2015 under ever more repressive conditions. What defines the underlying logic, structure of these new party systems and the nature of party competition remains ambiguous due to the lack of data from the region. The Arab Barometer (http://www.arabbarometer.org/) and the World Values Survey (http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp) remain limited in dealing with political choice in the region since neither of these allows for determining the proximity or agreement levels of respondents with political parties. We aim

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in this article to provide an answer as to how much congruence exists in these founding elections between voter preferences and vote propensities for political parties compared to relatively more stable and institutionalized democracies in the region. We adopt the spatial voting framework, asserting that voters tend to support parties and candidates closer to them. Comparing the two relatively institutionalized electoral democracies in the region—Israel and Turkey—with emerging party systems in post-Arab Spring Tunisia and Egypt—as well as with the Moroccan party system under monarchical non-democratic tutelage, allows us to diagnose the influence of the nature of electoral democracy upon the emerging patterns of policy congruence between voters and parties.

Since national election studies are absent in three of our cases, we developed online Vote Advice Applications (V.A.A.). V.A.A. ask voter opinions about salient issues and places each of them in a multidimensional political landscape where they can compare their policy preferences with official positions of political parties.[1] V.A.A. are particularly useful in generating massive opt-in samples but have inference-based limitations in representativeness. Their substantive utilization in spatial voting models and party mapping research provides new methodological and empirical opportunities. Particularly in settings where the academic infrastructure for national elections studies is missing, V.A.A. allow us to sample large pools of voters in all five countries that enable us to analyse the spatial cleavages in these electorates.

Spatial competition in comparative perspective

The linkage between policy preferences of voters and positions of parties is a central question in democratic politics. Miller and Stokes argued that parties that neglect voter opinions and expectations are unlikely to garner significant electoral support.[2] This idea of policy congruence between parties and their electorate assumes that voters determine their party choice based on issue positions of parties and understand the relative 'distances' of the parties on issue dimensions. The central assumption in spatial voting models is that voters will cast their votes for the party that is closest to them in the issue space.[3] The Downsian model is criticized for its assumption of a unidimensional space and its neglect of various impacts—those of political leaders or charismatic figures,[4] of evaluations of the incumbents and of campaign effects or other non-rational sentiments—on the final vote choice. Also, a directional model of voting argues that the direction of the (dis)agreement is more important than proximity between voters and parties on a given issue.[5] An alternative view of party competition is built on the idea that parties emphasize different policy issues during a

[1]See, A.P.M. Krouwel, M.T. Wall and T. Vitiello, 'The Practicalities of Issuing Vote Advice: A New Methodology for Profiling and Matching', *International Journal of Electronic Governance,* 5(3/4) (2012), pp. 223–243; and A.P.M. Krouwel, T. Vitiello and M. Wall, 'Voting Advice Applications as Campaign Actors: Mapping VAAs' Interactions with Parties, Media and Voters', in *Matching Voters with Parties and Candidates: Voting Advice Applications in Comparative Perspective*, ed. D. Garzia and S. Marschall (Colchester: ECPR Press, 2014), pp. 67–78.

[2]W.E. Miller and D.E. Stokes, 'Constituency Influence in Congress', *The American Political Science Review*, 57(1) (1963), pp. 45–56.

[3]See A. Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1957); J.M. Enelow and M.J. Hinich, *The Spatial Theory of Voting: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[4]See for instance, I. McAllister, 'The Personalization of Politics', in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*, ed. R.J. Dalton and H.D. Klingemann (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 571–588; and L. Karvonen, *The Personalization of Politics: A Study of Parliamentary Democracies* (Colchester: ECPR Press, 2010).

[5]G. Rabinowitz and S.E. Macdonald, 'A Directional Theory of Issue Voting', *The American Political Science Review*, 83(1) (1989), pp. 93–121.

campaign. In this perspective, parties try to mould voters' preferences by differentially emphasizing issues that promote their strengths and avoiding those which give an advantage to their competitors.[6] Alternatively, in party systems where tribal allegiances and clientelistic mobilization patterns are prevalent, the link between individual policy preferences and official policy positions will be weak.

In a simple Downsian model, we expect an inverse linkage between distance to a party and the likelihood to vote for that party. Additionally, transitional democracies, as opposed to more institutionalized ones, should differ from one another. The pace with which the decline in the likelihood to vote occurs could vary from country to country due to various historical and institutional reasons.

Talking about cleavage politics reflecting social and attitudinal bases of political parties, Enyedi asserts that 'institutionalization is supposed to lead to stability *and* predictability' (p. 300, italics added).[7] As Mainwaring and Scully argue, stability in the patterns of interaction, strong party roots in society, party legitimacy and strong party organization not only lead to party system institutionalization but also a more predictable representation of group loyalties and cleavage positions by political parties.[8] As the ideological commitments of the parties are expected to be better known and digested by the electorate in more institutionalized settings, the rate of decline should be steeper as historical commitments of the parties and institutional support bases will push down the likelihood to vote as distance grows in the issue space.

Most empirical research on party–voter congruence is conducted in advanced industrial democracies of Europe and North America. There are several cases outside advanced democracies in which the implications of spatial voting models have been tested, including Ukraine,[9] Chile,[10] Russia[11] and Taiwan.[12] The findings of these studies have shown that a low-dimensional political space can be derived in each case and the proximity of parties' positions to

[6]For different versions of this approach see under the 'dominance principle': W.H. Riker, *The Art of Political Manipulation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986); W.H. Riker, 'Rhetorical Interaction in the Ratification Campaigns', in *Agenda Formation*, ed. W.H. Riker (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 81–126; the 'saliency theory': I. Budge and D. Farlie, *Explaining and Predicting Elections: Issue Effects and Party Strategies in Twenty-Three Democracies* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983); I. Budge, 'Issues, Dimensions, and Agenda Change in Postwar Democracies: Long-term Trends in Party Election Programs and Newspaper Reports in Twenty-three Democracies', in *Agenda Formation*, ed. W.H. Riker (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 41–80; and the 'issue ownership theory': J.R. Petrocik, 'Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections', *American Journal of Science Review*, 58(4) (1996), pp. 825–850; J.R. Petrocik, W.L. Benoit and G.J. Hansen, 'Issue Ownership and Presidential Campaigning, 1952–2000', *Political Science Quarterly*, 118(4) (2003), pp. 599–626.

[7]Z. Enyedi, 'The Social and Attitudinal Basis of Political Parties: Cleavage Politics Revisited', *European Review*, 16(3) (2008), pp. 287–304.

[8]S. Mainwaring and T. Scully, *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995). See also, R.H. Dix, 'Democratization and the Institutionalization of Latin American Political Parties', *Comparative Political Studies,* 24(4) (1992), pp. 488–511; M. Kuenzi and G. Lambright, 'Party System Institutionalization in 30 African Countries', *Party Politics*, 7(4) (2001), pp. 437–468; S. Mainwaring and M. Torcal, 'Party System Institutionalization and Party System Theory after the Third Wave of Democratization', in *Handbook of Party Politics*, ed. R.S. Katz and W. Crotty (London: Sage, 2006), pp. 204–227 on party system institutionalization and Ş. Yardımcı-Geyikçi, 'Party Institutionalization and Democratic Consolidation: Turkey and Southern Europe in Comparative Perspective', *Party Politics*, 21(4) (2015), pp. 527–538, on party institutionalization, which obviously is linked to party system institutionalization but rather refers to inner organizational features of political parties rather than their system-level characteristics.

[9]M.J. Hinich, V. Khmelko and P.C. Ordeshook, 'Ukraine's 1998 Parliamentary Elections: A Spatial Analysis', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 15(2) (1999), pp. 149–185.

[10]J.K. Dow, 'A Spatial Analysis of Candidate Competition in Dual Member Districts: The 1989 Chilean Senatorial Elections', in *Empirical Studies in Comparative Politics*, ed. M.J. Hinich and M.C. Munger (New York: Springer US, 1998), pp. 233–256.

[11]M. Myagkov and P.C. Ordeshook, 'The Spatial Character of Russia's New Democracy', in *Empirical Studies in Comparative Politics*, ed. M.J. Hinich and M.C. Munger (New York: Springer US, 1998), pp. 273–305.

[12]T.M. Lin, Y.H. Chu and M.J. Hinich, 'Conflict Displacement and Regime Transition in Taiwan: A Spatial Analysis', *World Politics*, 48(4) (1996), pp. 453–481.

voters' ideal points explains their party choices. Additionally, Çarkoğlu and Hinich's analysis of Turkey shows that two historically rooted separate dimensions—reflecting a centre–periphery cleavage that largely overlaps with the conventional left–right dimension and attitudes towards socio-political change—dominate the ideological space in the Turkish party system.[13]

Deegan-Krause argues that studies of cleavage structures in the Middle East usually only include Turkey and Israel, as they are the only countries in the region which were able to develop competitive party systems.[14] We now turn to our five country cases for an in-depth look at the character of vote choices as they relate to party system institutionalization.

Democratic consolidation and party competition in five Middle Eastern countries

To diagnose the nature of political parties' linkages with their constituencies, we use the expert survey data from the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (D.A.L.P.)[15] which show that Egypt and Turkey have higher levels of clientelistic party–voter linkage mechanisms (3.66 and 3.63 on a 1–4 scale, respectively) than Morocco (3.46) and Israel (2.92). Conversely, a programmatic measure shows that Israel has the highest programmatic linkage with voters (0.33 on an additive index which ranges from 0.05 to 0.68), while Egypt and Turkey are moderately programmatic (0.29 and 0.28) and Moroccan parties only establish low programmatic linkages (0.11).

Rahat and Hazan argue that in the Israeli 2013 elections, the party system became more unstable.[16] Their argument suggests that there were shifts across parties thanks to the rise of socio-economic issues and decline of security concerns. The fact that there is a rapid emergence of a new organizational setting which can address abrupt changes in issue saliency is a sign of party–voter responsiveness that we argue for the Israeli case. On the other side of the spectrum, Al-Ississ and Atallah show for the Egyptian case that private patronage benefits (e.g. public-sector employment) have a substantial effect on the mobilization of voters.[17] In fact, this effect is stronger than consequences of the secularist ideological outlook and lower than pro-change political attitudes. This finding supports our argument in the sense that non-ideational factors such as personal gains play a crucial role in Egypt where the party system is less consolidated than Israel. Therefore, we are not able to capture peculiar, non-ideational and apolitical factors that can be relatively more important in voters' decision to support a party. In such cases, we expect political attitudes to remain secondary at best, and our empirical findings present evidence for such lack of congruence. By democratic consolidation in the Middle East, we refer to ideological congruence between parties and voters rather than institutional continuity of democratic procedures. Therefore, our conceptualization of democratic consolidation is minimalist in the sense that it is based

[13]A. Çarkoğlu and M.J. Hinich, 'A Spatial Analysis of Turkish Party Preferences', *Electoral Studies*, 25(2) (2006), pp. 369–392.
[14]K. Deegan-Krause, 'New Dimensions of Political Cleavage', in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, ed. R.J. Dalton and H.D. Klingemann (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 538–544.
[15]For details of the DALP data-set, see https://sites.duke.edu/democracylinkage/ and H. Kitschelt, *Data-set of the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP)* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 2013). https://sites.duke.edu/democracylinkage/ (accessed 16 April 2017).
[16]G. Rahat and R.Y. Hazan, 'Increased Personalisation in an Unstable Party System: The 2013 Elections in Israel', *Representation*, 49(3) (2013), pp. 375–389.
[17]M. Al-Ississ and S. Atallah, 'Patronage and Ideology in Electoral Behaviour: Evidence from Egypt's First Presidential Elections', *European Journal of Political Economy*, 37 (2015), pp. 241–248.

solely on a peculiar reason (congruence) for why voters choose a party over others. We expect such consolidation to occur with institutionalization of political parties, a functioning electoral democracy, relatively acceptable levels of press freedom, and substantively free formation of parties. Through these mechanisms, voters may be able to develop stronger and more substantive ideological ties with political parties and, over time, this would yield democratic consolidation. To better explain this argument and conceptualization, we first present contextual details from our cases.

In Israel, one single cleavage superimposes itself upon all other political divisions: the regional conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Ever since the Six Day War, the main Israeli political parties have been deeply divided over the future of the captured territories.[18] Security issues have structured the vote more than any other social division because such matters became interlocked with the religious–secular split and nationalist attitudes. Shamir and Arian argue that identity issues are increasingly defining the Israeli vote.[19] Hence, the salience of identity issues results in a combination of policy preferences and party support while fortifying existing cleavages.[20] Over time, the welding of religious nationalism with a 'hawkish', anti-territorial concession attitude on security and the amalgamation of secularism with a 'dovish' stance on the territorial question, resulted in a deep political rift in Israeli society and politics.

In contrast, Shalev argued that class voting is present in Israel, yet that class is closely related to ethnicity.[21] The complex interaction between geographical community, ethnicity, class and religion, as well as the role of the state in socio-economic redistribution, makes it difficult in Israel to estimate the independent effect of social class on voting behaviour.[22] Government policies aimed at concentrating specific immigrant waves in targeted areas of Israel have created regional socio-economic disparities.[23] There are clear differences in voting patterns between immigrants from earlier and later waves, which attests to class voting as well.[24] An analysis of party platforms showed that the economy is the second most salient cleavage in Israel, which together with security seems to underpin political competition in Israel.[25]

Religion also structures voting behaviour in Israel. Barnea and Schwartz found that traditional religious values are the most powerful discriminator for voting behaviour.[26] This state-religion dimension is closely related to the liberal–conservative continuum, to which issues of individual rights and freedom are aligned. Earlier studies also found a positive

[18]A. Arian and M. Shamir, 'A Decade Later, the World Had Changed, the Cleavage Structure Remained: Israel 1996–2006', *Party Politics*, 14(6) (2008), pp. 685–705.
[19]M. Shamir and A. Arian, 'Collective Identity and Electoral Competition in Israel', *The American Political Science Review*, 93(2) (1999), pp. 265–277. See also, A. Arian et al., 'The Election Compass: Party Profiling and Voter Attitudes', in *The Elections in Israel 2009*, ed. A. Arian and M. Shamir (Piscataway, N.J.: Transaction Books, 2011), pp. 275–298.
[20]H.M. Stoll, 'Social Cleavages, Political Institutions and Party Systems: Putting Preferences Back into the Fundamental Equation of Politics' (Doctoral diss., Stanford University, 2005), p. 108.
[21]M. Shalev, 'Liberalization and the Transformation of the Political Economy', in *The New Israel: Peacemaking and Liberalization*, ed. G. Shafir and Y. Peled (New York: Westview Press, 2000), pp. 129–159.
[22]M. Shalev and S. Kis, 'Social Cleavages among Non-Arab Voters: A New Analysis', in *The Elections in Israel, 1999*, ed. A. Arian and M. Shamir (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2002), pp. 67–96.
[23]J.T. Shuval and E. Leshem, 'The Sociology of Migration in Israel: A Critical View', in *Immigration to Israel: Sociological Perspectives*, ed. E. Leshem and J.T. Shuval (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1998), pp. 3–49.
[24]S.M. Lipset, *The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1979).
[25]Stoll, 'Social Cleavages, Political Institutions'.
[26]M.F. Barnea and S.H. Schwartz, 'Values and Voting', *Political Psychology*, 19(1) (1998), pp. 17–40.

correlation between religious observation and voting for right-wing and religious parties. Religious parties receive support almost exclusively from religious voters.[27]

A similar phenomenon of reduced political dimensionality is observed in Turkey as well. Çarkoğlu shows for the 1950–1995 period that party manifesto emphases along two dimensions converge towards a more universalist end opposing local traditionalist emphases as well as towards civil society as opposed to government-controlled economic argumentation.[28] Hazama argues, 'social cleavages and the party system in Turkey seem to be heading for convergence.' (p. 379).[29] However, Çarkoğlu and Hinich's spatial analysis still reveals the importance of a *sui generis* centre–periphery cleavage. On the one hand lies a secularism (or left à la Turca) vs. Islamism (or right-wing conservatism) dimension while on the other a status quo (or Turkish nationalism) vs. reform (or acceptance of Kurdish identity) dimension exists.[30] The rise of a dominant party—the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi—A.K.P.)—and the formation of a predominant party system suggest a political, mental and attitudinal differentiation and polarization if not a segregation within Turkish society.[31]

While Turkey and Israel are usually presented as 'consolidated' democracies, some reservations should be made. The Israeli and Turkish cases not only show a reduced dimensionality of the political space, with a contemporaneous social and political polarization on the dominant dimension, but also continuous leadership control over political parties. In both countries, party system consolidation is undermined by political 'entrepreneurship' of leaders either founding new parties that are heavily under personal control or if parties are taken over and continue to exist, these organizations are transformed, so that leadership control is optimized. Moreover, Turkey's democracy has experienced several disruptions and reversals due to repeated military coups (such as the 1980 military intervention) and constant tensions between the military establishment and party leaders.[32] While the Turkish political system was able to conserve its competitive electoral structure, it did nevertheless develop into a

[27]For research on religious voting in Israel see, A. Arian, *The Choosing People: Voting Behavior in Israel* (Cleveland, OH: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), pp. 55–56; C. Zuckerman-Bareli, 'The Religious Factor in Opinion Formation among Israeli Youth', in *On Ethnic and Religious Diversity in Israel*, ed. S. Poll and E. Krausz (Tel Aviv: Bar Ilan University, 1975), pp. 53–89; P. Burstein, 'Social Cleavages and Party Choice in Israel: A Log-linear Analysis', *American Political Science Review*, 72(1) (1978), pp. 107–108; S. Zelniker and M. Kahan, 'Religion and Nascent Cleavages: The Case of Israel's National Religious Party', *Comparative Politics*, 9(1) (1976), pp. 34–35; I. Greilsammer, 'Campaign Strategies of the Israeli Religious Parties, 1981–1984', in *The Elections in Israel—1984*, ed. A. Arian and M. Shamir (Tel Aviv: Ramot, 1986). pp. 79–95); and E. Don-Yehiya, 'The Resolution of Religious Conflicts in Israel', in *Conflict and Consensus in Jewish Political Life*, ed. S.A. Cohen and E. Don-Yehiya (Tel Aviv, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1986), pp. 203–218.

[28]A. Çarkoğlu, 'The Turkish Party System in Transition: Party Performance and Agenda Change', *Political Studies*, 46(3) (1998), pp. 544–571.

[29]Y. Hazama, 'Social Cleavages and Electoral Support in Turkey: Toward Convergence?', *The Developing Economies*, 41(3) (2003), pp. 362–387.

[30]Çarkoğlu and Hinich, 'A Spatial Analysis of Turkish Party Preferences'.

[31]E. Lindqvist and R. Östling, 'Political Polarization and the Size of Government', *American Political Science Review*, 104(3) (2010), pp. 543–565, shows that Turkey ranks among the most highly polarized countries (ninth out of 74 countries). See also, Akın H. Ünver, 'Turkey's Invisible Cold War: Islamist and Secular Communalizations', *Yale Journal of International Affairs*, 6(1) (2011), pp. 102–104; E.F. Keyman, 'The AK Party: Dominant Party, New Turkey and Polarization', *Insight Turkey*, 16(2) (2014), pp. 19–31; and Y. Kaya and L. Sunar, 'The Culture Wars Redux? The Polarization of Social and Political Attitudes in Turkey', *Social Currents*, 2(4) (2015), pp. 393–412 on rising political polarization in Turkey.

[32]For Turkish military regimes, see W. Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London: Routledge, 1993); and Ü. Cizre-Sakallıoğlu, 'Problems of Democratic Governance of Civil-Military Relations in Turkey and the European Union Enlargement Zone', *European Journal of Political Research*, 43(1) (2004), pp. 107–125. For discussions of more recent interventions, see N. Narlı, 'Civil-Military Relations in Turkey', *Turkish Studies*, 1(1) (2000), pp. 107–127.

predominant party system.[33] Although our article—for reasons of comparison—focuses solely on the 2011 general elections, Turkey has seen a downturn in democratic governance recently, experiencing a failed military coup in July 2016 and significant democratic backsliding in its aftermath. The continuous formation of new parties and shifts in existing political organizations have rendered Israel one of the most volatile electoral democracies among established democracies. While Israel has remained the most resilient democratic regime in the region,[34] it does experience huge security issues both inside and outside its borders, providing political leaders who have a military background with an edge over politicians with a purely civilian career.

Despite these serious reservations on democratic consolidation as conceptualized here, our other three cases—Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia—are clearly on the opposite side of the stability spectrum. Morocco, where we collected data during the 2011 parliamentary election, is a monarchic authoritarian regime with severe restrictions and limitations on democratic freedoms for political parties and voters. Despite this repression, Tessler and Gao found that the Moroccan public was one of the most supportive of democracy in the Arab World.[35] The regime tried to absorb these pro-democratic tendencies by implementing largely cosmetic political reforms and minor democratic openings under royal tutelage in the late 1990s and early 2000s, by integrating the Islamist Justice and Development Party (J.D.P.) into the party system. However, simultaneously using various policies, the monarchy shielded itself from any meaningful opposition. Mass protests against the regime during the Arab Spring began to threaten the status quo, but King Mohammad VI was able to control the political crisis by holding early parliamentary elections and initiating minor constitutional reform. Buehler argues that the regime conducted elections as a 'safety-valve' for the authoritarian system, which eventually backfired by the J.D.P.'s rise, albeit resulting only in minor political concessions and the writing of a new constitution.[36] Also, in a comparison of Egyptian and Tunisian constitutional assemblies, Hartshorn shows that the Moroccan constitutional commission can follow a path similar to those of both Egypt and Tunisia.[37] Before these reforms were implemented, the King was authorized to appoint and dismiss all prominent political figures. Although post-Arab Spring reforms somewhat increased the power of the executive and legislature, political elites continue to be selected at the King's discretion (or minimally Makhzen approval). Moroccan political parties are still prevented from responding to voter preferences because of continued limits on party platforms and electoral campaigns, which has caused political parties like An-Nahj La Voix Démocratique and Parti de l'Avant-garde Démocratique et Socialiste to boycott the parliamentary elections.

[33]For some relevant news articles on the coup and the post-coup period restrictions, see, D.H. Kinney, 'Civilian Actors in the Turkish Military Drama of July 2016', *Eastern Mediterranean Policy Note*, 10 (2016), pp. 1–12; P. Kingsley, 'Turkey in Turmoil and Chaos Since Purge Aimed at Dissenters', *The New York Times*, 12 April 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/12/world/europe/turkey-erdogan-purge.html (Accessed on January 18, 2018); Alison Abbott, 'Turkey Sacks Thousands of University Staff', *Nature*, 6 September 2016, http://www.nature.com/news/turkey-sacks-thousands-of-university-staff-1.20550 (Accessed on January 18, 2018).

[34]See Polity IV country trends: http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm.

[35]M.A. Tessler and E. Gao, 'Gauging Arab Support for Democracy', *Journal of Democracy*, 16(3) (2005), pp. 83–97.

[36]M. Buehler, 'Safety-Valve Elections and the Arab Spring: The Weakening (and Resurgence) of Morocco's Islamist Opposition Party', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 25(1) (2013), pp. 137–156; M. Buehler, 'Continuity through Co-optation: Rural Politics and Regime Resilience in Morocco and Mauritania', *Mediterranean Politics*, 20(3) (2015), pp. 364–385.

[37]I.M. Hartshorn, 'Organized Interests in Constitutional Assemblies: Egypt and Tunisia in Comparison', *Political Research Quarterly*, 70(2) (2017), pp. 408–420.

Furthermore, continued incorporation of party elites into the monarchic orbit hinders parties' congruence with their voters' preferences. One example of this was the establishment of the Authenticity and Modernity Party (A.M.P.) in 2007 by Fouad Ali El Himma, a close friend of the King. Independent M.P.s and political notables were successfully integrated into the ruling elite close to the monarchy through the machinations of the A.M.P.[38] Besides the role of political Islamism, Morocco lacks clear-cut political cleavages when compared with the Turkish and Israeli cases. Both the lack of well-established political cleavages and the incorporation of parties into the monarchy inhibit party system congruence with voters' policy preferences in Morocco. In fact, Wegner and Pellicer suggest that support for Moroccan Islamists is based on fluid and various reasons and motivations which are not ideological.[39]

Following the upheavals brought by the Arab Uprisings, Tunisia and Egypt are still in the process of political transition with uncertain outcomes.[40] Notwithstanding the uncertainty of the direction of change, it is clear that neither can claim democratic consolidation. Additionally, it is questionable whether we can observe a 'structural change' in the region after the Arab Spring. In fact, recent comparisons from the post-2011 period suggest the revival of authoritarian rule in Egypt. Also in Tunisia, democratic procedures may not be able to solve problems of political economy according to Hinnebusch. While Tunisia has held constituent assembly elections and presidential elections that were relatively free, Egypt has been sliding back into military authoritarianism after annulled legislative elections, the ousting of an elected president and the renewed military control of the state. Both countries initially saw a plethora of new parties being established and legally recognized after the uprisings. With their well-established social networks and clientelistic practices, the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist movements were best equipped to respond to the material needs of their constituents.[41] This institutionalization of incentive provision mechanisms through vast social networks gave the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and its political wing, the Freedom and Justice Party (F.J.P.), a distinct advantage over its competitors. However, both the Islamist and the secular fronts failed to present a substantiated electoral platform. According to Hassan, party manifestoes 'addressed Egypt's most pressing problems like unemployment, education, and healthcare with extremely general phrases and promises of increased spending without specifying how the suggested measures will be financed'.[42] Indeed, deep divisions and high levels of political polarization between Islamists and liberals over the institutional framework for Egypt and the role of religion in public life obscured the debate on substantive policy issues on the socio-economic dimension.

[38]J. Liddell, 'Notables, Clientelism and the Politics of Change in Morocco', *The Journal of North African Studies*, 15(3) (2010), pp. 315–331.

[39]M. Pellicer and E. Wegner, 'Socio-economic Voter Profile and Motives for Islamist Support in Morocco', *Party Politics*, 20(1) (2014), pp. 116–133.

[40]We thank our anonymous reviewers for suggesting this argument on 'authoritarian updating'. For further discussions, see R. Hinnebusch, 'Change and Continuity after the Arab Uprising: The Consequences of State Formation in Arab North African States', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 42(1) (2015), pp. 12–30.

[41]For work on Islamism's strength in Egypt see, M. Brocker and M. Künkler, 'Religious Parties: Revisiting the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis', *Party Politics*, 19(2) (2013), pp. 171–186; J. Clark, 'Social Movement Theory and Patron-clientelism. Islamic Social Institutions and the Middle Class in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen', *Comparative Political Studies*, 37(8) (2004), pp. 941–968; L. Diamond, 'Why Are There no Arab Democracies?', *Journal of Democracy*, 21(1) (2010), pp. 93–112; T. Masoud, *Counting Islam: Religion, Class, and Elections in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and N.J. Davis and R.V. Robinson, *Claiming Society for God: Religious Movements and Social Welfare in Egypt, Israel, Italy, and the United States* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

[42]M. Hassan, 'Elections of the People's Assembly, Egypt 2011/12', *Electoral Studies*, 32(2) (2013), pp. 370–374.

Tunisia endured an autocratic regime under Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, albeit somewhat different from Hosni Mubarak's Egypt. Early on in his term, Ben Ali initiated reforms by legalizing previously banned political parties and releasing some Islamist political prisoners. Tunisia remained one of the most likely candidates to experience a liberalizing transition according to Noland's spatial and socio-demographic models.[43] A stilted transition to democracy was only realized in early 2011 when Ben Ali was forced out of office by severe social protest and pressure from political and economic elites, and the first free and fair elections were held in late 2011. Most political parties were founded or recognized after the revolution, except for the secular-leftist Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties (D.F.L.L.) and the Progressive Democratic Party (P.D.P.).

Ennahda, a moderate Islamist party, gained most support during the elections, winning 89 out of 217 seats, while an entirely unknown party of a media mogul (suspected of *ancien régime* connections) came in second. However, political developments after the elections—including the assassination of prominent political opposition figures—served as early indications that a transition towards democracy, let alone consolidation and institutionalization of democracy, is a cumbersome process. Compared to Morocco and Egypt, the Tunisian case may be more promising, and the country underwent a second election in 2014 with a peaceful change of government. Additionally, the Islamist movement in Tunisia as represented by Ennahda attempted to lessen the rift within the country's conservative–secular social cleavage. The party's electoral victory and cross-ideological coalition in 2011 suggest that the party became a mainstream, moderate conservative party following the Arab Spring. As we will further describe in our findings, Ennahda could not reach out to potential voters by mobilizing Islamists by specific policy issues. Then, following its electoral victory, the party accepted democratic procedures and continues to be a highly relevant, moderate political force for the conservative constituents in the country. By accepting to step down in 2013 after months of political turmoil and agreeing to negotiate with secular opposition groups, Ennahda lessened the rifts and polarization in the country even if it could not respond to potential constituents by specific policy positions back in the 2011 elections. In this respect, in succeeding elections, we would expect Ennahda and other parties to be better able to address specific policy concerns of Tunisian voters. But still, Benstead suggests that security concerns and stability are important motivating factors for Tunisians.[44] The early indicators of democratization and consolidation are more promising in Tunisia, and this case comprises the middle ground of our five cases.

These five cases represent a range of variation in democratic consolidation and the level at which political parties are historically bound, institutionalized or ideologically grounded in society. This gradation in party institutionalization and cleavage linkage to voter preferences can be seen as a ranking in which Israel is the most consolidated electoral democracy, followed by Turkey (at least until the 2011 elections). On the complete opposite side is Morocco, which is a non-competitive authoritarian regime. Egypt, particularly after the renewed takeover by the military, is closer to the authoritarian pole than the democratic

[43]M. Noland, 'Explaining Middle Eastern Political Authoritarianism I: The Level of Democracy', *Review of Middle East Economics and Finance*, 4(1) (2008), pp. 1–30.
[44]L.J. Benstead, 'Why Do Some Arab Citizens See Democracy as Unsuitable for Their Country?', *Democratization*, 22(7) (2015), pp. 1183–1208.

side, with Tunisia being in the middle of the distribution. To test these relative levels of party institutionalization and convergence towards electoral preferences, we use original data-sets that were collected in recent elections in each of these cases.

Method and data

To gather data on voters' opinions on issues and party (or candidate) positions on the same issues, we developed V.A.A. in all five countries.[45] We offered access to the electorates at large via mass media during post-Arab uprising elections between 2011 and 2014. We collaborated with local academics and media venues to design relevant questionnaires and then distributed them through journalists and/or online web pages of our media partners.[46]

In all these online applications, we asked voters their opinion on substantive policy issues, leadership evaluation and their vote propensities. The latter was measured for each given party (or presidential candidate) by asking users how likely they were to vote for all relevant political parties (or candidates) running in the election, with answer categories ranging from 0 (not likely at all) to 10 (very likely to vote). We use these propensities to vote (P.T.V.) and the agreement between respondents and all of the relevant political parties (candidates) to evaluate how likelihood to vote for a party is linked to policy preference congruence (or distance) between respondents and political parties. From analyses of advanced and institutionalized democracies, we know that closer policy distance between parties and voters is associated with high levels of P.T.V.[47]

Next, we analysed how voters and parties align along the major political lines of division in each country using two main conflict dimensions in each country. These dimensions differ across countries, but in general, they reflect the cultural and economic cleavage structures in each context. We assess party–voter congruence by measuring the Euclidean distance between voters and the four largest political parties in their country. This distance is based on 30 pre-determined policy preference questions relevant to the electoral campaign in each country, which were developed by scholars who are country experts.[48] These issues relate to both the economic dimension and the cultural cleavage of social change vs. conservatism. Official positions on issues for each party were extracted from their election manifestos or websites by a team of trained—native-speaking—academics in each country, after which a measurement based on the spatial distance of the respondent from each of the political parties was calculated. Based on the Downsian spatial voting argument, this calculation should suggest a negative correlation between the respondent's likelihood to vote

[45]For examples of V.A.A. see, Krouwel, Vitiello and Wall, 'Voting Advice Applications as Campaign Actors'; and A.P.M. Krouwel and A. van Elfrinkhof, 'Combining Strengths of Methods of Party Positioning to Counter Their Weaknesses: The Development of a New Methodology to Calibrate Parties on Issues and Ideological Dimensions', *Quality & Quantity*, 48(3) (2014), pp. 1455–1472.

[46]For an example of how journalists and social media have an impact on distribution of V.A.A., see the study on the Turkish case by: A. Çarkoğlu, T. Vitiello and M. Moral, 'Voter Advice Applications in Practice: Answers to Some Key Questions from Turkey', *International Journal of Electronic Governance*, 5(3–4) (2012), pp. 298–317.

[47]C. Van der Eijk et al., 'Rethinking the Dependent Variable in Voting Behavior: On the Measurement and Analysis of Electoral Utilities', *Electoral Studies*, 25(3) (2006), pp. 424–447.

[48]The online appendix presents these 30 questions across our cases. For a full methodology of the text-based hand-coding of parties see, Krouwel and van Elfrinkhof, 'Combining Strengths of Methods'; A.P.M. Krouwel and M.T. Wall, 'From Text to the Construction of Political Party Landscapes. A Hybrid Methodology Developed for Voting Advice Applications', in *From Text to Political Positions. Text Analysis across Disciplines* (Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture), ed. B. Kaal, I. Maks and A. Elfrinkhof (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2014), pp. 275–296; and Krouwel, Vitiello and Wall, 'Voting Advice Applications as Campaign Actors'.

Table 1. Six elections, four largest parties and their vote shares.

Turkey—2011		Israel—2013		Egypt—Parliament 2011	
J.D.P.	49.83	Israel Beitenu*	23.34	F.J.P.	37.5
R.P.P.	25.98			Al-Nour	27.8
N.A.P.	13.01	Yesh Atid	14.33	N.W.	9.2
P.D.P.	6.57	Labor	11.39	F.E.P.	8.9
Total vote share	95.39		49.06		83.4
Effective number of parties	2.96		8.68		4.20
Tunisia—2011		Morocco—2011		Egypt—Presidential 2012	
Ennahda	37.04	J.D.P.	22.8	Morsi	24.78
C.P.R.	8.71	Istiqlal	11.9	Shafik	23.66
Forum	7.03	N.R.o.I.	11.3	Sabahi	20.72
P.D.P.	3.94	A.M.P.	11.1	AboulFotouh	17.47
Total vote share	56.72		57.1		86.63
Effective number of parties	4.78		7.95		4.92 (first round)

*Likud and Israel Beitenu formed an electoral alliance on 25 October 2012, approximately 3 months before the election. Of the 31 seats won by the coalition, 20 were given to members of Likud while 11 were given to Israel Beitenu. Turkish Republican People's Party is abbreviated as R.P.P.

for a certain party and the respondent's distance to that party. In other words, the lower the respondent's distance to a party, the more likely the respondent is to judge that party positively (with a high P.T.V. score).

We selected the four largest parties in each of our five party systems, as we assumed that voters would be most familiar with their issue stances, compared to smaller, marginal parties (Table 1). The total share of the electorate represented by these parties differs across cases which suggests a variance in the effective number of parties (E.N.P.) in each country. The highest share of votes was observed in the 2011 Turkish general elections where the four largest parties made up 95.4 per cent of total votes. Due to considerable fragmentation, the lowest share of votes was observed in the 2013 Israeli general elections with the four largest parties garnering a mere 49.1 per cent of total votes. In fact, calculations of E.N.P. according to Laakso and Taagepera's formula[49] indicate that Turkey had the lowest E.N.P. with 2.96 parties while Israel had the largest E.N.P. with 8.68 parties. This finding is not surprising, given the unusually high level of electoral threshold in Turkey (10%), but this cannot account for the variance in E.N.P. as Israel is the second country in our cases to have an electoral threshold whereas the other three cases do not have any electoral threshold.

To ensure the accuracy of each V.A.A., we conducted a quality check and removed respondents not residing within the country and those who did not respond to the V.A.A. in their native language (Arabic, Hebrew or Turkish for respective countries).[50] On average, 25 per cent of respondents were removed in the logic check (see Table 2). We only used respondents that fully completed the V.A.A. questionnaire. The final data-sets were comprised only of respondents who answered not only all issue questions but also the vote propensity question in their respective native languages and resided within the geographical boundaries of the countries in question (determined by a geo-location variable that was

[49]M. Laakso and R. Taagepera, 'Effective Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to West Europe', *Comparative Political Studies*, 12(1) (1979), pp. 3–27.

[50]We thank our anonymous reviewers for raising the issue of some social groups in Tunisia and Morocco who can genuinely prefer French over Arabic. We replicated the analyses presented here with these groups in the online appendix in the section 'Replicating findings with French speakers in Tunisia and Morocco', which also presents some additional details about language choices across our V.A.A.

Table 2. Summary statistics.

Variable name	n	Mean	Std dev.	Min	Max	Variable name	n	Mean	Std dev.	Min	Max
EGYPT Parliament						MOROCCO					
dist_fjp	59,605	0.93	0.56	0	4.47	dist_jdp	19,688	0.83	0.49	0	4.61
dist_nour	59,605	1.67	0.61	0	5.32	dist_istiqlal	19,688	0.68	0.42	0	3.13
dist_wafd	59,605	1.32	0.54	0	3.66	dist_rally	19,688	1	0.46	0	3.34
dist_fep	59,605	1.91	0.61	0	4.58	dist_amp	19,688	1.14	0.44	0	3.63
ptv_fjp	42,181	5.43	4.1	0	10	ptv_jdp	16,009	5.98	4.04	0	10
ptv_nour	36,456	3.45	3.97	0	10	ptv_istiqlal	14,770	1.4	2.62	0	10
ptv_wafd	35,175	3.32	3.54	0	10	ptv_rally	14,239	1.8	2.89	0	10
ptv_fep	34,704	4.04	3.88	0	10	ptv_amp	14,270	1.3	2.56	0	10
Age	39,275	30.86	10.74	18	78	Age	14,531	31.57	11.1	18	78
Education	39,376	4.81	0.59	0	5	Education	14,995	4.50	0.97	0	5
Gender	38,255	0.28	0.45	0	1	Gender	14,521	0.25	0.43	0	1
EGYPT President						TUNISIA					
dist_ morsy	63,820	1.49	0.48	0	3.71	dist_nahda	11,253	1.26	0.56	0	3.44
dist_shafik	63,820	1.91	0.5	0	4.06	dist_con-gress	11,253	1.22	0.55	0	2.92
dist_ sabahi	63,820	1.19	0.47	0	4.17	dist_forum	11,253	1.69	0.59	0	2.55
dist_fot-ouh	63,820	0.98	0.4	0	3.56	dist_pdp	11,253	1.48	0.52	0	2.75
ptv_morsy	35,959	2	3	0	10	ptv_nahda	9441	2.82	3.97	0	10
ptv_shafik	37,112	1.75	2.9	0	10	ptv_con-gress	8507	5.33	4.21	0	10
ptv_ sabahi	36,519	4.47	3.56	0	10	ptv_forum	8676	2.4	3.32	0	10
ptv_fot-ouh	37,569	3.91	3.54	0	10	ptv_pdp	8728	1.34	2.85	0	10
Age	50,210	30.78	10.58	18	78	Age	9083	33.02	11.74	18	78
Education	50,453	4.82	0.57	0	5	Education	9320	4.73	0.74	0	5
Gender	48,786	0.24	0.42	0	1	Gender	9117	0.58	0.49	0	1
ISRAEL						TURKEY					
dist_likud	85,727	1.5	0.8	0	3.96	dist_jdp	60,004	0.62	0.34	0	4.01
dist_beit	85,727	1.86	0.77	0	4.32	dist_rpp	60,004	0.64	0.31	0	4.05
dist_yesh	85,727	0.92	0.54	0	3.93	dist_nap	60,004	0.8	0.37	0	3.69
dist_labor	85,727	1.6	0.8	0	4.45	dist_pdp	60,004	0.75	0.36	0	4.21
ptv_likud	62,190	3.99	3.6	0	10	ptv_jdp	49,485	3.25	3.99	0	10
ptv_beit	60,646	2.14	2.99	0	10	ptv_rpp	49,737	5.03	3.68	0	10
ptv_yesh	60,396	4.24	3.36	0	10	ptv_nap	47,317	4.83	3.64	0	10
ptv_labor	61,546	4.45	3.41	0	10	ptv_pdp	46,277	3.08	3.42	0	10
Age	86,404	33.80	12.96	18	87	Age	57,725	32.91	12.05	18	88
Education	90,839	3.61	1.50	0	5	Education	58,426	4.63	0.65	0	5
Gender	92,098	0.40	0.49	0	1	Gender	58,105	0.23	0.42	0	1

automatically generated). Summary statistics (Table 2) indicate that there was considerable variance between countries on the number of V.A.A. respondents.

Given the limits of online sampling techniques, one methodological criticism of conducting research with opt-in, non-probability V.A.A. data is the problem of representativeness.[51] While probability samples also suffer from selection bias and over-representation of certain groups, one would assume that an online, opt-in survey like a V.A.A. cannot claim to be representative of the total population. This is particularly the case in countries with lower

[51]One alternative to account for this problem of representativeness is to weigh the sample by referring to census data. When we conducted the analyses presented here with region and gender weights which are available for Turkey and Israel, the results do not change.

Internet penetration as are found in the Middle East. Despite the obvious shortcomings of every survey and sample methodology, online sampling techniques enable researchers to collect large-N samples from respondents that are very willing to fill out long and complex questionnaires. Online surveys can be more easily adapted and are more flexible than face-to-face surveys. In our study, V.A.A. allowed us to gather a greater amount of data from a larger number of voters when compared to traditional surveys by combining wide-ranging information about their political behaviour, their opinions and their background characteristics. Also, studies have shown that computerized self-administration reduces measurement error relative to other modes of data collection, increasing both the level of responses and the reported accuracy of opinions and attitudes when compared with more 'conventional' surveys.[52] Moreover, online survey questions are answered more truthfully and carefully than interviewer-administered surveys.[53] Also, the immediate reward of a personalized outcome that compares individual preferences with party positions is an incentive to be truthful. This combination of self-selection and self-administration leads to a pool of respondents that are less likely to misreport their preferences and behaviours, meaning measurement errors should be smaller.

More importantly, for this study, we cannot use traditional surveys or national elections studies, as such studies simply do not exist in several of our cases or there are legal and practical obstacles in surveying the population. For example, no national election study has been conducted in Egypt, Tunisia or Morocco. Given the difficulties of conducting nationally representative electoral surveys in non-democratic countries, Middle Eastern cases are especially suitable for utilizing V.A.A.[54] As a result, V.A.A. data provide researchers with more precise placements of voters and parties on issues that can be aligned along multiple salient political dimensions. Our analysis also demonstrates that studies based on V.A.A. samples have face validity that can help us explain important political developments in different parts of the world.

Most V.A.A. use a linear definition of distance by computing the agreement between a voter and each of the parties or candidates for each issue included in the test. Eventually, users simply get a ranking of parties, with the top choice being the party with the largest overlap in terms of users' issue positions. In contrast, the V.A.A. we developed place users and parties in a multidimensional political space, based on averaged aggregated positions for parties and individual voters.[55] Each set of specific questions was scaled to specific cleavage dimensions that differ from country to country.[56] Our V.A.A. also compare the personal issue positions of respondents with the official issue positions of parties, based on the idea that opinions on individual issues can be assigned to a limited number of issue dimensions. In the graphical representation offered to the respondent at the end of the V.A.A., the result is the aggregated mean of all positions on each of the issue dimensions. Thus, the V.A.A.

[52]See for instance, F. Kreuter, S. Presser and R. Tourangeau, 'Social Desirability Bias in CATI, IVR, and Web Surveys: The Effects of Mode and Question of Sensitivity', *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 72(5) (2008), pp. 847–865; and J.W. Sakshaug, T. Yan and R. Tourangeau, 'Nonresponse Error, Measurement Error, and Mode of Data Collection', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 74(5) (2010), pp. 907–933.

[53]K. Olson, 'Survey Participation, Nonresponse Bias, Measurement Error Bias, and Total Bias', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 70(5) (2006), pp. 737–758.

[54]It is important to underline that there are efforts for representative surveys in the region as well. One prominent example is the Arab Barometer. However, as noted already, the Arab Barometer and other similar surveys, such as the World Values Survey, do not have similar questions or items that are comparable across our cases.

[55]Krouwel and Wall, 'From Text to the Construction of Political Party Landscapes'.

[56]Krouwel, Wall and Vitiello, 'The Practicalities of Issuing Vote Advice'.

combine preferences per dimension based on a Euclidean distance model and summarize this into a personalized party–voter comparison.

In the V.A.A. implemented in our five cases, two to six dimensions (in the case of Israel) were used: all V.A.A. initially provided a comparison between voter and parties along a socio-economic left–right dimension and a 'moral' social liberal–conservative dimension. In Turkey and Israel, the precise labels connected with these dimensions vary, while country-specific issues were developed that reflected the most significant political cleavages in that particular case. The ever-present economic left–right dimension includes questions that deal with the state's role in the economy, socio-economic redistribution, levels of taxation, subsidies and social security provisions. The religious-moral dimension that pits social liberals vs. conservatives, on the other hand, included very different issues in each country, but always addressed Islamic religious norms and values, personal freedoms of expression, press freedoms and gender equality, among others. In Israel, the structure of the political system and the nature of social cleavages were more complex, necessitating higher dimensionalities that related to security issues, particularly concerning the Israel–Palestine conflict.

Findings

Our first results are based on graphical linkages between voters' scores on P.T.V. questions and their distance to official party positions as diagnosed by the country experts. We expect that as an individual's distance from a party's positions increases, their likelihood to vote for that party will decline. For each case, we measured the average distance between the four largest parties and their relevant P.T.V. orders. In Israel, Turkey and Egypt's parliamentary elections, the graphs confirm our expectations.

Turkey and Israel

For all of the four relevant parties in Turkey, as the distance between an individual and a political party in a two-dimensional space decreases, the likelihood to vote for that party increases. One exception is the Nationalist Action Party (N.A.P.). As the distance between an individual's position and that of the N.A.P. increases, the likelihood to vote for the N.A.P. decreases only slightly. Several factors can explain this lack of congruence between voters and the N.A.P. First of all, the N.A.P. represents an ultranationalist far-right ideological heritage. It was the third largest party in the country and received around 13% of total votes in 2011. Questions that are relevant to nationalism and right-wing ideology are included in the Turkish V.A.A. However, the final issue positioning may not be capturing all the salient issues for the N.A.P. and its voters. Perhaps more importantly, the N.A.P. was hit by a series of scandalous events that brought the moral integrity of some of its leaders into question during the election campaign period of the 2011 general elections. In consequence, the linkage between the ideological distance and likelihood to vote for the N.A.P. was broken.

For the three other parties in Turkey, we observe that those who are close to the party in various policy issues were also inclined to support their respective party. For instance, Figure 1 suggests that those who were not likely at all to vote for the ruling A.K.P. (0 for P.T.V.) were more than two times farther away from the party's policy positions (1.49) compared to someone who scored A.K.P. with a 10 on the P.T.V. scale (0.71). Similar patterns emerge for the other two opposition parties as well. This suggests that the V.A.A. issue questions

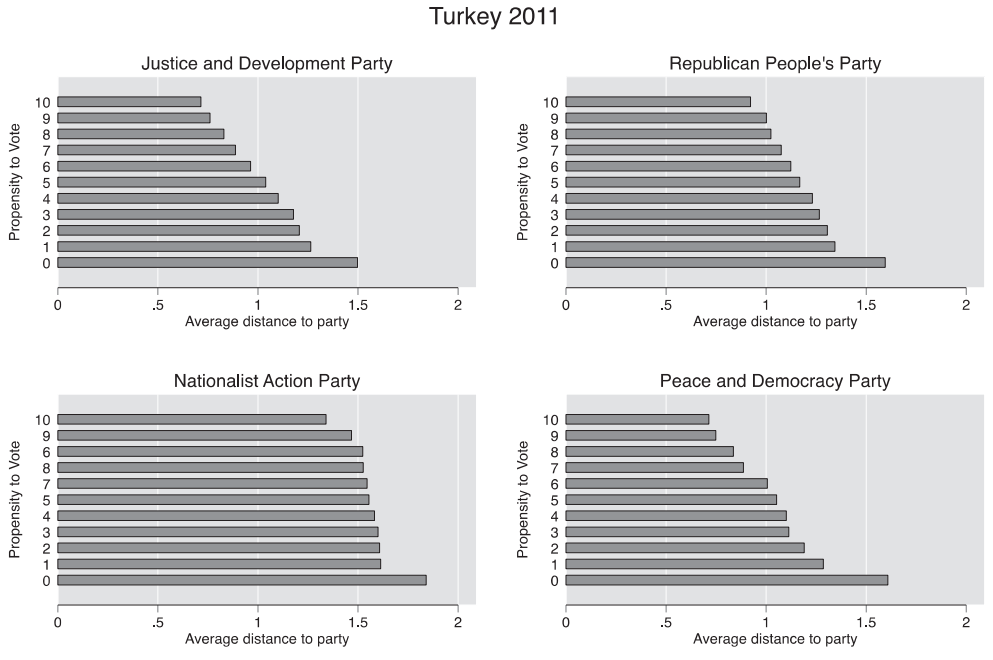

Figure 1. Average distance to parties across PTV scores, Turkey 2011.

were tapping into issues that are relevant for A.K.P. supporters and the party was responding to its constituents on such issues back in the 2011 general elections. Given the recent democratic downturn in the country and the A.K.P.'s increasing dominance in party competition, we would expect to observe a decomposition in the congruence between supporters and the party platform.

Like in Turkey, results from Israel's 2013 general elections show that the P.T.V. for one of the four largest parties increases as voters agree more with the relevant party's policy stances on salient issues (Figure 2). Even if Israel is on the opposite side of the spectrum when compared to Turkey regarding legislative fractionalization, they share an important empirical finding. Both Turkish and Israeli political parties are firmly embedded into cleavage structures. Hence in both countries, we observe a high degree of congruence between the likelihood to vote for a party and the distance from individual positions to political parties' positions in the ideological space.

Similar to Turkey, the Israeli party system also had one party, Yesh Atid, for which the likelihood to vote is not very sensitive to distance in the ideological space. The party ran on a platform of change, reform and efficiency, and gained popularity thanks to its charismatic leader, Yair Lapid, who is a well-known media personality (and the son of another 'flash-party' politician). Compared to the more institutionalized and older parties in Israel's party system, Yesh Atid was able to translate a different discourse into unexpected results at the ballot box. Results from our V.A.A. reveal that since Yesh Atid had taken a more centrist position, its average distance to voters is much smaller than any other party amongst the four parties included in our analysis. It is also striking to observe that the average ideological distance between those who would not consider voting for Yesh Atid (P.T.V. = 0) and those who would consider voting for Yesh Atid (P.T.V. = 10) is smallest amongst the four parties. In other words,

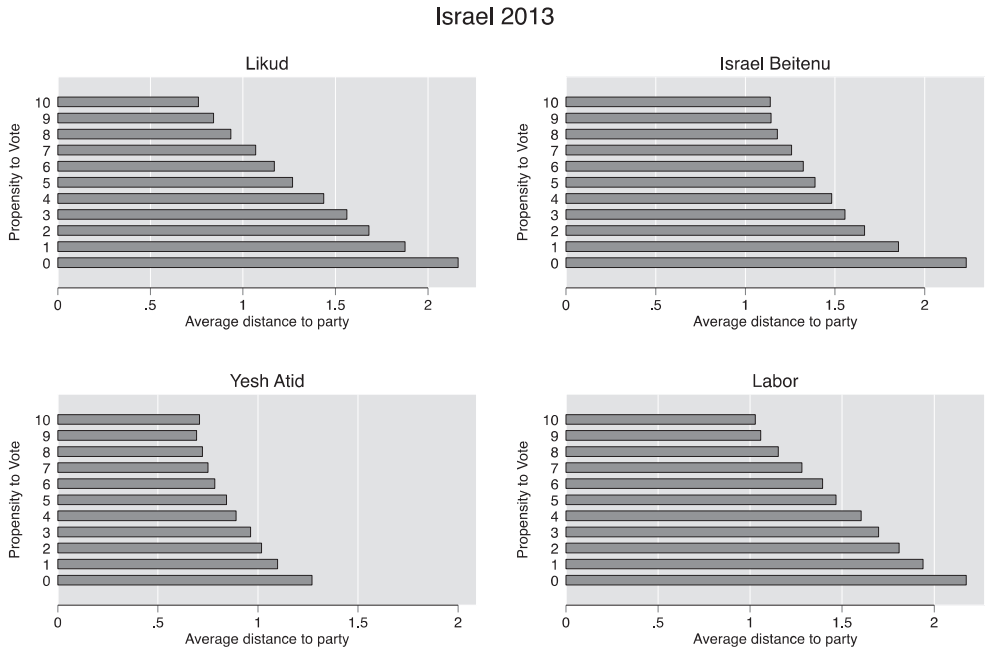

Figure 2. Average distance to parties across PTV scores, Israel 2013.

similar to the N.A.P. in Turkey, preferences concerning Yesh Atid are driven not by spatial distance but by *sui generis* considerations that break the distance link to the likelihood of voting. In both countries, the two parties that had the least expected negative correlation between the ideological distance and the likelihood to vote for them appear to be the ones that are either new to the system (Yesh Atid) or occupy the most marginal positions (N.A.P.), with constituencies that would or would not consider voting for this party irrespective of the ideological distance. In consequence, we observe a weakening of the linkage between ideological distance and likelihood to vote for these parties.

Morocco

In this study, Morocco represents the other side of the political spectrum in the region. We compare transitioning countries and institutionalized electoral democracies with Morocco. While in Morocco some uprisings also ensued during the Arab Spring, the outcome was different than in Egypt and Tunisia. Early general elections were held in 2011, and the King quickly implemented a constitutional 'reform' package, which won almost universal support (with 98.5 per cent voting in favour). Although voter turnout for the constitutional referendum was relatively high at nearly 75 per cent, turnout for the elections held in late November 2011 was very low (45 per cent). This low mobilization potential of political parties suggests a low level of internal political efficacy which is to be expected in a country where the King's authority overrides all legislative and executive powers.

Morocco is home to a multi-party system where political parties lack deep social roots. Three main parties, Istiqlal (Independents Party), the National Rally of Independents (N.R.o.I.) and the Authenticity and Modernity Party (P.A.M.), all represent the wealthy clique of

Moroccans known as the Makhzen. Istiqlal is a staunch defender of the monarchy and traditional monarchical authority, while P.A.M. and R.N.I. mainly include political figures with close royal connections. The largest party in the 2011 elections, the J.D.P., represents moderate Islamism and is—as its name suggests—ideologically influenced by its Turkish counterpart, the A.K.P. The Moroccan J.D.P. gained prominence in the late 1990s and became the second largest party in the 2007 legislative elections. Our empirical results as presented in Figure 3 and Table 4 indicate that besides the J.D.P., no other party is socially embedded in Moroccan society and no other party shows any sign of linkages with the voters. In fact, even the J.D.P.'s average likelihood to vote does not as expected go down as the distance grows. For instance, those respondents who indicated they were highly unlikely to vote for the J.D.P. (P.T.V. order of 1) were closer to the J.D.P.'s party platform than those who indicated an above-average likelihood to vote for the J.D.P. (P.T.V. order of 6). This pattern could be related to the fact that very few respondents in the opt-in sample gave the J.D.P. a P.T.V. of 1 (only 3.5 per cent). Nevertheless, the J.D.P. seems to be the only party with some societal resonance in Morocco and appears to be the only viable challenger to the King. Pellicer and Wegner argue that the J.D.P. won almost all the votes of the educated middle class in the country. After the J.D.P. had won the 2011 elections, it was able to hold onto power unlike parties in Egypt and Tunisia, which have witnessed widespread political turmoil.

Tunisia and Egypt

Tunisia's constituent assembly elections were held 10 months after the revolution, on 23 October 2011.[57] The four parties we include in Tunisia were all well institutionalized and established before the revolution. This stands in contrast to parties like Yesh Atid in Israel and the Free Egyptians Party (F.E.P.) in Egypt. The institutional strength of the parties, however, does not translate directly into social embeddedness or a competitive party system able to represent different social interests and conflict dimensions apart from the dominant Islamism vs. secularism divide. In this respect, the Tunisian case demonstrates a problem of interest articulation in democratic transition elections.

Tunisian elections also failed to show a gradually declining spatial proximity between parties and voters, based on their vote propensities. We do not observe a lowering of the likelihood to vote for any party as the distance between that party and the individual grows. In fact, the probability of voting for any Tunisian party appears to remain more or less constant, irrespective of the distance a voter has towards that party in the issue space. Tunisia's first democratic elections confirm the finding of earlier work on democratization, which argues that transition periods do not end with founding elections. This is evident in the failure of Tunisian party manifestoes to align with the preference structures of likely voters. The low congruence between parties and voters in Tunisia shows that the party system is still in transition and much more extensive voter–party interaction is necessary.

A good example is the Democratic Forum for Labor and Liberties party, which was allowed to function during Ben Ali's reign. Unlike the Progressive Democratic Party (P.D.P.), the Democratic Forum did not boycott the rigged elections that Ben Ali staged before the revolution. This early institutionalization of the Democratic Forum may have given this party

[57]In Tunisia, we could not include the fourth largest party, Current of Love, of media mogul Hamdi as this 'flash' party had no platform or presence before the election and was not included in the Election Compass.

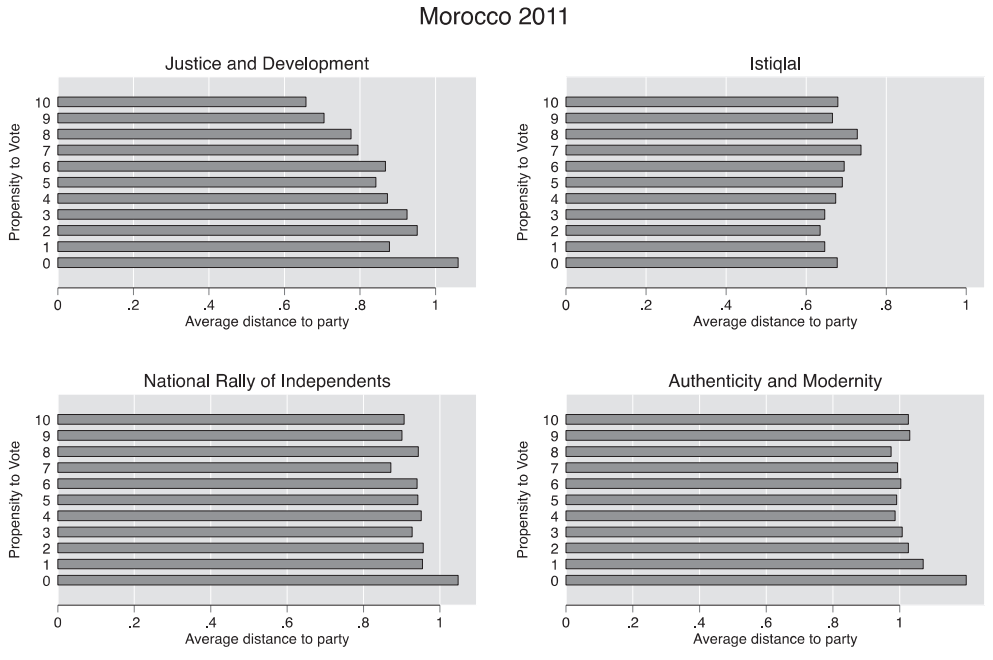

Figure 3. Average distance to parties across PTV scores, Morocco 2011.

an advantage, which may account for its somewhat higher level of party–voter linkage. However, earlier participation in the political process did not give the Democratic Forum much advantage on election day in 2011, as Ennahda received 37 per cent of the vote whereas the Democratic Forum received only 7 per cent of the vote. There is no clear pattern between parties being previously banned from politics and gaining support in Tunisia's first post-revolutionary elections. This also becomes clear when we look at the Al-Arida Popular Petition party, which came in fourth in popular support (third in seats), being only developed shortly before the election, without a clear programme or clear-cut positions in the national political landscape. Our experts had not taken this party seriously as it simply promised 200 dinar handouts to jobless people and a private investment of 2 billion dinars into the economy. Nevertheless, media-mogul Hamdi persuaded many Tunisians to support him. Our analysis indicates that an individual's inclination to vote for any given party in Tunisia is not associated with the spatial proximity of a voter. Such weak cleavage articulation, congruence with constituency preferences and social embeddedness can also be seen in Morocco and Egypt.

Egyptian parliamentary elections were held in three stages between 28 November 2011 and 11 January 2012. These were the first elections in the region in which the moderate Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, under the banner of the F.J.P., participated. The F.J.P. gained no less than 37.5 per cent of the votes, with the more radical Islamist Al-Nour Party coming in second with 27.8 per cent of the votes to the surprise of many observers. In total, these two Islamist parties accounted for over 65 per cent of the vote in this founding election.

Cross-party differences in vote propensities vs. spatial proximity also indicate that the only relevant cleavage in the Egyptian election was conservative Islamism vs. social liberalism (Figure 4). Our V.A.A. questionnaire included questions on the role of sharia in society and

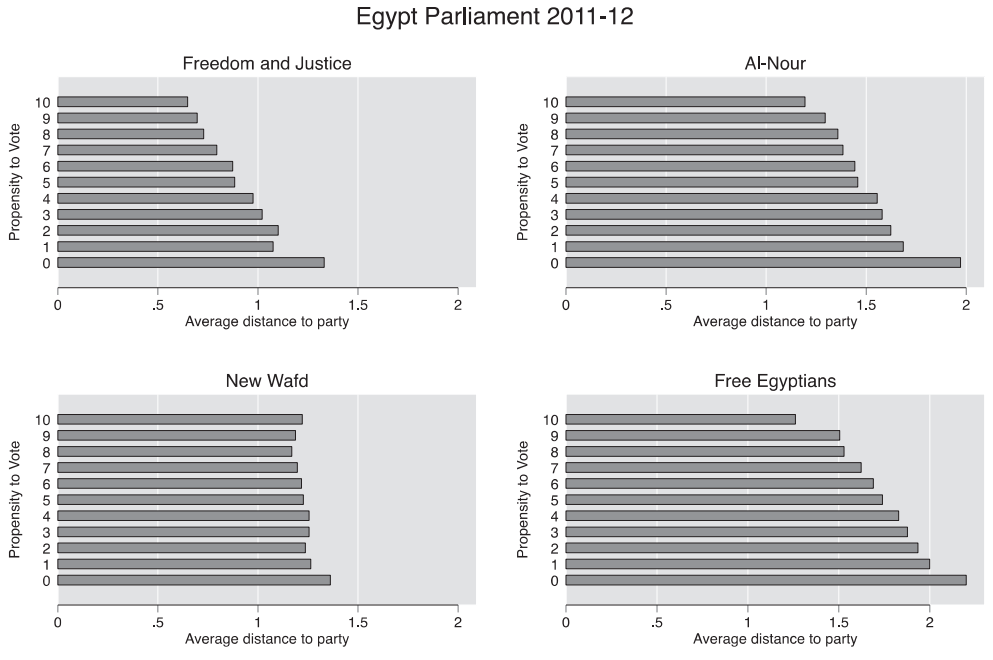

Figure 4. Average distance to parties across PTV scores, Egypy parliamentary elections 2011–2012.

economics, the political position of the Coptic minority as well as the role of women in politics and family life. We found that the standard deviation of respondents' scores along the cultural-religious axis was higher than that of scores along the economic left–right axis. Both F.J.P. and Al-Nour were more communicative and responsive to their core electorate than the more liberal and leftist parties. Although Al-Nour was on average more distant to its core voters when compared to the F.J.P., this resulted in both Islamist parties showing a gradual decline in the likelihood to vote as the average distance between parties and voters grew.

Additionally, the right-wing F.E.P., which represents the more liberal segments of Egyptian society, showed a high degree of social embeddedness and voter linkage in our results. Its core constituency is made up of voters from the Coptic minority, the business community, social liberals and intellectuals. Given that these segments of civil society were the driving force behind the revolution, the F.E.P. appears to have been the best party in articulating their political concerns and thus clearly appealed to liberal, non-Islamist voters. Another non-Islamist party, New Wafd (N.W.), is the reincarnation of one of the oldest parties in Egypt, yet internal turmoil and an ill-conceived electoral alliance with the F.J.P. (which was cancelled shortly before the elections) undermined the party's credibility among liberal voters. Competing in the elections independently, N.W. came in third with 9.2 per cent of the votes, just ahead of the social liberal Egyptian bloc, which consisted of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party, the F.E.P. and the Progressive Union Party and won 8.9 per cent of the votes. Despite its long history, our results show N.W. appeared to have the weakest articulation and congruence with voter preferences of all Egyptian parties.

In Egypt's 2012 presidential elections (Figure 5), the four top presidential candidates received 86.6 per cent of the vote, which resulted in the second round of run-off elections

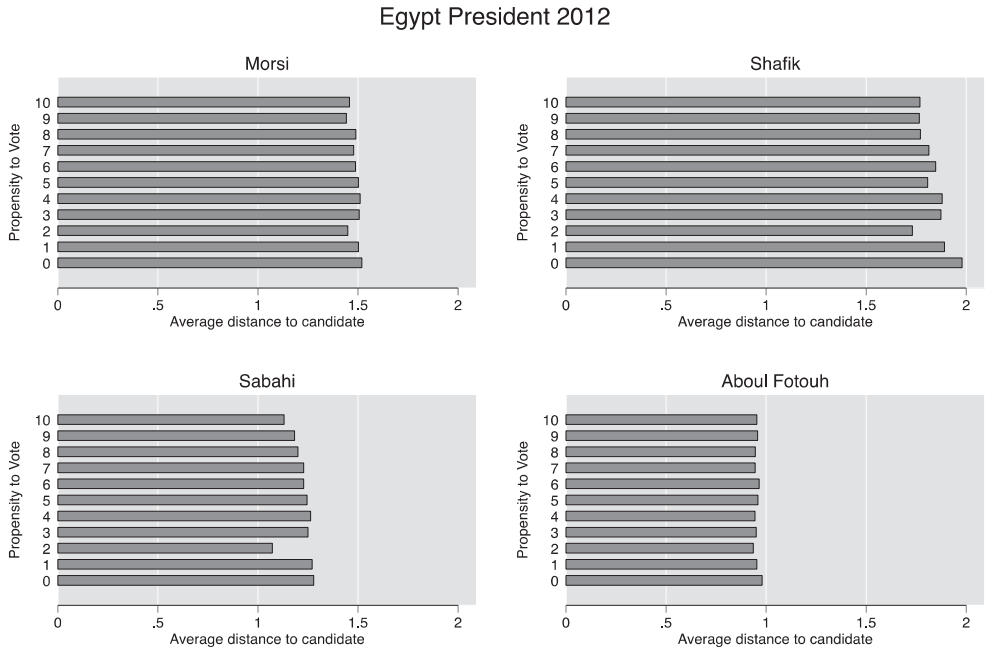

Figure 5. Average distance to parties across PTV scores, Egypy presidential elections 2012.

being between Mohamed Morsi (F.J.P.) and Ahmed Shafiq (running as an Independent, but aligned with the *ancien régime*). For the first round of this election, we developed a V.A.A. questionnaire addressing current salient issues, with each question scaled to either the cultural-religious or the economic left–right dimension. Among the respondents, we did not come across any meaningful pattern of spatial proximity and P.T.V. scores for candidates. For instance, voters who indicated they were highly unlikely to vote for Morsi (P.T.V. score of 2) had an average distance similar to those who were staunch supporters of Morsi, giving the maximum P.T.V. value of 10. Similar low levels of interest and cleavage articulation were found for other candidates as well. In other words, voters who said they were very likely to vote for a candidate had similar distances with voters who indicated that they were not at all likely to vote for a given candidate.

One explanation is that with both major candidates being economically right-wing, there was only space for the articulation of the Islamist–liberal dimension, even though the main line of conflict was support for resistance to the former regime. Substantive issues were pushed back as the campaign centred on the extent to which the election would result in regime change and political elite replacement. A point of contention during the election was which new political figures would replace the old order. There was less evidence of this in the parliamentary elections as the old elite was barred from participating. Morsi won the presidency by a narrow 3 per cent margin. The discourse throughout the election did not focus on economic issues related to the left–right cleavage. Instead, the country became polarized over whether Islamist political figures were betraying the revolution, whether the J.D.P. constituted a real transition or whether the election of Morsi would lead to the Islamization of Egypt.

The absence of any substantive competition between the presidential candidates and resulting problems with issue selection, as well as fewer respondents when compared to the parliamentary elections, may have impacted our ability to examine the cleavage dynamics of the presidential elections. Furthermore, whether construct validity or substantive shifts and developments in Egypt explain the lack of presidential candidates' parallelism with their constituency preferences requires further methodological research on V.A.A. design, which is outside the scope of this paper.

Discussion and conclusions

Our analysis on the spatial proximity of voters in Turkey, Israel, Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia to parties they are highly likely to vote for suggests an overall very low social embeddedness of political parties, evidenced by low congruence between policy preferences of voters and policy positions of political parties.

To summarize all country analyses, Table 3 presents correlations between the P.T.V. and average spatial proximity of voters to political parties. When parties are socially embedded, responsive and provide a clear choice in democratic elections, we should expect to find significant correlations between spatial proximity and vote propensities. In other words, as respondents who are closer to the party in the national political issue space appear more likely to vote for that party we should observe a negative correlation between distance and P.T.V.

Along with our discussion of the graphical findings presented earlier, we observe significant and negative correlations between distance and P.T.V. for all parties in our country sample except the Congress for the Republic (C.P.R). in Tunisia. The case of the C.P.R. is the only party with insignificant correlations between the distance measure and P.T.V. in our analyses. The fact that the C.P.R. has effectively disappeared from the electoral scene in the aftermath of the 2011 elections is evidence of low institutionalization that is expected to lie behind this insignificant linkage between the spatial distance between parties and voters and their propensity to vote for parties close to them.

To further substantiate these main findings, Table 4 summarizes the relationship between spatial distance and vote propensity through an ordinal logistic regression model with demographic controls. After controlling for age, education attainment and gender, we see that for most parties (except again the Tunisian C.P.R.), the distance in the issue space was inversely related to P.T.V., which is in line with the assumption that P.T.V. should decline as the spatial distance increases. The distance coefficients show that the strongest cleavage articulation and social embeddedness were found in Turkey, followed by Israel. Also, Egypt's parliamentary elections exhibited relatively strong connections between an individual's distance from a party and the likelihood to support that party. A similar difference among elections is found with the degree of explanatory power of these models as reflected in the r-square values. The Israeli case has the highest average Nagelkerke r-square value at 0.29 followed by Turkey at 0.25. The Egyptian case follows closely behind with 0.21. Again, we saw that the Turkish N.A.P. and the Egyptian N.W. had low r-square values, indicating these parties were the least able to mobilize voters closest to them in the political space.

In conclusion, our findings suggest that the founding elections in post-Arab Spring Egypt and Tunisia were characterized by low correspondence between formal party positions on salient issues and voter preferences when translated into the distance in the national issue space. Overall, there was a muted articulation of deep social cleavages. Even though it is

Table 3. Correlation between Probability to Vote (P.T.V.) orders and voters' distance to party.

Israel		Turkey	
Likud	−0.64	J.D.P.	−0.54
Israel Beitenu	−0.50	R.P.P.	−0.51
Yesh Atid	−0.39	N.A.P.	−0.26
Labor	−0.49	P.D.P.	−0.49
Egypt Parliament		Morocco	
F.J.P.	−0.49	J.D.P.	−0.31
Al-Nour	−0.47	Istiqlal	0.012
N.W.	−0.11	N.R.o.I.	−0.11
F.E.P.	−0.53	A.M.P.	−0.16
Tunisia		Egypt Presidential	
Ennahda	−0.24	Morsy	−0.04
C.P.R.	0.03	Shafik	−0.14
Forum	−0.16	Sabahi	−0.01
P.D.P.	−0.07	AboulFotouh	−0.01

Note: All correlation coefficients are significant at $p < 0.001$.

Table 4. Explaining the Probability to Vote (P.T.V.) scores with distance in the issue space and demographic controls, ordinary least squares model.

		Distance	Female	Education	Age	Constant	r^2	N
Turkey	J.D.P.	−3.913***	−0.511***	−0.134***	−0.020***	30.345***	0.32	47,761
	R.P.P.	−3.704***	0.481***	0.050*	0.031***	0.554	0.25	48,006
	N.A.P.	−1.404***	−0.388***	−0.163***	0.008***	31.319***	0.07	45,728
	P.D.P.	−2.780***	−0.262***	−0.133***	−0.005***	27.401***	0.27	44,725
Israel	Likud	−2.879***	−0.416***	0.090***	−0.013***	8.559***	0.43	55,900
	Israel Beitenu	−1.896***	−0.400***	−0.017*	−0.013***	6.388***	0.27	54,543
	Yesh Atid	−2.432***	0.061*	0.129***	0.002*	5.874***	0.15	54,284
	Labor	−2.066***	0.001	0.048***	0.006***	7.325***	0.25	55,311
Morocco	J.D.P.	−2.538***	0.463***	−0.045***	−0.011*	7.882***	0.11	11,496
	Istiqlal	−0.084	−0.642***	0.029	0.017***	1.897***	0.02	10,589
	N.R.o.I.	−0.715***	−0.920***	0.078*	−0.010***	4.074***	0.03	10,195
	A.M.P.	−0.981***	−0.453***	−0.079**	−0.012***	4.095***	0.03	10,261
Tunisia	Ennahda	−2.707***	1.242***	−0.385***	−0.018***	5.743***	0.09	7452
	C.P.R.	0.275	0.321***	0.131	−0.048***	5.263***	0.02	6765
	Forum	−2.135***	−0.434***	0.192**	0.024***	5.349***	0.06	6893
	P.D.P.	−0.959***	−0.719***	0.02	0.043***	3.398***	0.04	6932
Egypt President	Morsi	−0.264***	−0.627***	−0.039	−0.002	3.426***	0.01	28,355
	Shafik	−0.773***	0.138***	−0.135***	0.019***	3.176***	0.03	29,067
	Sabahi	−0.089*	−0.228***	0.348***	−0.006**	3.008***	0.003	28,979
	Aboul Fotouh	−0.106*	−0.198***	0.199***	−0.013***	3.491***	0.003	29,822
Egypt Parliament	F.J.P.	−3.556***	0.699***	−0.332***	0.008***	9.188***	0.25	27,596
	Al-Nour	−2.959***	0.939***	−0.586***	0.005*	10.021***	0.25	23,996
	N.W.	−0.647***	0.238***	−0.515***	0.024***	5.890***	0.02	23,287
	F.E.P.	−3.147***	−0.543***	−0.186***	0.015***	11.330***	0.28	22,780

*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.
***$p < 0.001$.

unrealistic to expect transitioning democracies to have fully institutionalized parties, with clearly articulated ideologies, high party congruence with core electorate preferences and substantive articulation of main social cleavages, we were nevertheless surprised that so little party–voter linkage was detected. As the cases of Turkey and Israel show, with increased institutionalization of political parties, longer periods of electoral democracy, higher levels of press freedom and free formation of parties, voters develop stronger and more substantive ideological ties to political parties.

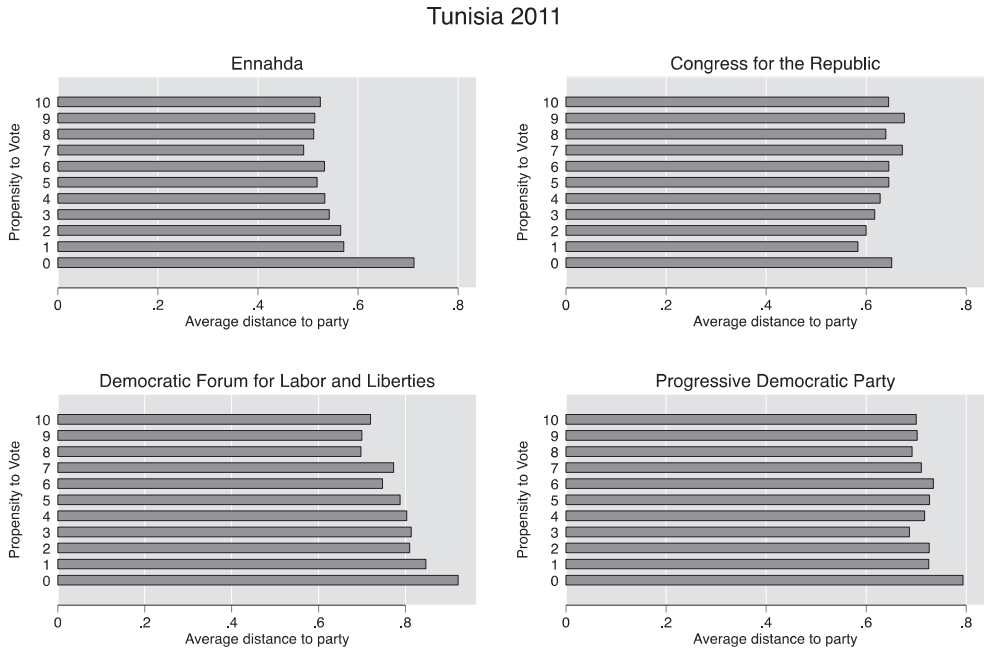

Figure 6. Average distance to parties across PTV scores, Tunisia 2011.

Although we have not touched upon it very much throughout the paper, comparing the Turkish A.K.P. and Tunisian Ennahda can be very telling since their trajectories yield interesting results: an Islamist conservative party which represents its voters' interests perfectly as Figure 1 on Turkey shows, and a party which aims for the same objective albeit without such perfect congruence (Figure 6). Yet, while the Turkish A.K.P. recently consolidated its power so as to initiate discussions of a full-fledged democratic backsliding among experts and pundits on Turkey,[58] we do not observe a similar driving force of authoritarianism for Ennahda. This is an unexpected development for this study and it can relate to alternative motivating factors behind the vote choice and contextual developments in the two countries in more recent periods.

This study did not delve into alternative mechanisms through which voters select a party when policy issues are not salient. If some voters in our cases do not vote for the parties that are most congruent with them ideologically, what can be some alternative motivations for preferring a political party? As we suggested in our theoretical discussion, party systems with high levels of tribal allegiances and clientelistic mobilization patterns can attenuate ideological congruence and hinder its development.[59] Additionally, in-group identification such as lineage ties, tribal networks and/or kinship can potentially reduce the effect of

[58]For some recent studies on backsliding in Turkey, see B. Esen and Ş. Gümüşçü, 'Rising Competitive Authoritarianism in Turkey', *Third World Quarterly*, 37(9) (2016), pp. 1581–1606; M. Somer, 'Understanding Turkey's Democratic Breakdown: Old vs. New and Indigenous vs. Global Authoritarianism', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 16(4) (2016), pp. 481–503.

[59]For the role of clientelism in several Middle Eastern countries, see E. Lust, 'Competitive Clientelism in the Middle East', *Journal of Democracy*, 20(3) (2009), pp. 122–135; and D. Corstange, *The Price of a Vote in the Middle East* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

ideological congruence. Voters may prefer a candidate or a party based on affinity and proximity to specific families or tribes rather than policy positions or ideological congruence. Additionally, institutional configuration such as gender quotas can increase descriptive representation and responsiveness as argued by Benstead.[60] This paper suggests that in lieu of ideological congruence and lack of party consolidation, parties cannot reach out to voters and mobilize them by referring to salient policy issues. Instead, other mechanisms seem to counteract the lack of ideological congruence.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

[60]L.J. Benstead, 'Why Quotas Are Needed to Improve Women's Access to Services in Clientelistic Regimes', *Governance*, 29(2) (2016), pp. 185–205.